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Prayer and Confession

Each year the Synod appoints a day of humiliation and prayer to be held throughout the Church to confess our sins and to seek an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our congregations. By the very fact that such a day is appointed yearly for this purpose, we may be ready to take it for granted and not view it and the duties of the day in the way which we ought to do. It is not a matter to be taken up lightly or engaged in without serious thought. What is done is done before Him who is the Searcher of the hearts and the Trier of the reins of the children of men. He takes no pleasure in the sacrifice of fools but says in His own Word: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil".

It is certain that it was in no light way that Daniel in his day approached God in confession and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes. He addressed the Lord as "the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments." Before the great God of eternity he made an open confession of sin saying, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments." He confessed, too, their refusal to give ear to the prophets, the servants of the Lord. Like David, he acknowledged the Lord to be righteous but to them belonged confusion of face.

When he comes to plead for this people whose sins he confessed, with what strong crying and tears he makes his plea. "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God; for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name".

And in the light of our many sins and our multiplied provocations, is it not such a confession and such supplications that we need in drawing nigh to God on a day set apart for confession of sin and for humiliation before Him? What need we have to this end of the Spirit of grace and of supplications for it is Spirit-indited prayer that will reach up to heaven and will bring an answer in peace.

The sacrifice we need most of all in going up to the house of God to confess our sins is the sacrifice of a broken spirit. The Psalmist who had learned to confess sin with deep contrition of heart acknowledged this. He says: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise". If the Lord were pleased to pour out His Spirit upon us in repentance on the day set apart as the day of humiliation and prayer, each congregation of the Church would become a Bochim indeed. What fruit of blessing this would bring, not only to our own souls, or to us as a Church alone, but also to the Church at large. Let us seek then at God's hand that it may prove a day long to be remembered in the congregations of His people.

Sermon

By Rev. E.A. Rayner, B.A.

(This sermon was preached in Wellington, N.Z., on 17th April 1977. It has been published in pamphlet form by Westminster Standard, P.O. Box 740, Gisborne, New Zealand)

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6: 44.

I wish to draw your attention as enabled tonight, to a verse you will find in the Gospel of John, chapter 6, verse 44. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day". I would like to draw your attention particularly to the first part of the verse, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him". We have here two of the great and fundamental truths of the Gospel of Christ, that is the sovereignty of God and the irresistible grace of God. Where grace is, it is sovereign and irresistible and this is something that is clearly set before us in this portion of the Word of God. We must also take careful note that the doctrine of the irresistible grace of God is taught throughout the Scriptures. It is not something that is isolated here, but something that we find in the teaching of God's Word.

And, as it is a clear teaching of the Word of God, it is something that has always been held by the true church, whether we are thinking of the church in the Old Testament, or the New Testament church in the days of the Apostles, or the church at the time of the Reformation, or the church today. It is a doctrine that has always been held by the true church of God and it will continue to be held, because you see, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. When we are thinking of the Old Testament, we may say that the Gospel is there in the bud, but when we come to the New Testament we have there the Gospel in full flower. The same doctrines are taught throughout the Word of God and in the church in every age and generation. Irresistible grace is therefore set forth with clarity in the confessions and catechisms at the time of the Reformation after the darkness of the Middle Ages. Wherever the true church is this doctrine of the irresistible grace of God will always be held and taught.

Just as the teachings of the Saviour were rejected by the Jews of Christ's day, so today we are not to be surprised if the professing church rejects this teaching, because of the prevailing apostacy. Many said then, "It is a hard saying, who can hear it?" So today many religious people express the same attitude. We need to be dogmatic today, although it is continually said we must compromise for the sake of unity. This is an age when truth is blurred, when distinctions are obscured, when black is made white and white is made black. So you see, we are to hold fast the form of sound words according to Paul's exhortation to Timothy. We have in the Bible the faith which was once delivered to the saints and it is not for us to teach for doctrines the commandments of men. It is not for us to soften down the Word of God to please the itching ears of men, but to set forth the truth of God. That is what the Lord will bless to the salvation of souls and we cannot expect that sinners will be saved where the Word of God is not proclaimed faithfully.

In seeking to make a few remarks upon the words of our text I would draw your attention first of all to the need there is of the Father's drawing. If there were no need of the Father's drawing then the Father would not draw. We would not need to be drawn to Christ for salvation if we could come to Him in our own strength. God makes a willing people in a day of His power. Psalm 110 clearly states that.

In the second place we might go on to notice the nature of the Father's drawing. What does that mean? What does that involve? What do we understand by the Father's drawing?

Thirdly we may notice the result of the Father's drawing. One who is

drawn by the Father comes to Christ as we see in our text, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

First of all then we have the necessity of the Father's drawing. This immediately draws our attention to man's condition. What is man's condition? If we are to understand what man's condition is, it is no use looking to the ideas of men. It is no use looking to our own reasoning. We must go to the infallible guide — the Bible. It is the instrument which detects our true moral and spiritual condition. The Bible brings to our attention the fact that man is altogether corrupt. This is the doctrine known as Total Depravity and is one of the Five Points of Calvinism. In other words, if you look at all the aspects of man's personality, in the light of God's Word, you will see the corruption of sin. We must then conclude that man is altogether in need of being drawn by the Father. Paul tells us, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that man is dead in trespasses and sins. If a man is dead in trespasses and sins he is without life. Just as a doctor has various instruments to tell whether there is life in the body or whether death reigns, so we must apply the instrument that God has given us, which is His Word, to each faculty of the soul of man. Of course, we are not dealing with the physical aspect of man's being, but we are referring to his personality. We are dealing with his soul and with spiritual matters. What we are to determine is whether there is a spiritual relationship between the soul and God.

Let us look at the mind of man. Then let us take the instrument God has given to determine whether there is spiritual life in the mind. The result is clear. The carnal mind, says the Bible, is enmity against God (Romans 8:7). What does the Bible say about the understanding? It says that the understanding is darkened (Ephesians 4: 18). You may have plenty of understanding about the things of the world, but that does not mean that there is understanding about spiritual things. Again look at the will of man and from Scripture you see the bondage of the will because of spiritual death. The Saviour says, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life". Now, there are many people today that say, "Oh yes, we believe in Total Depravity. We believe in the Apostle's remark that man is dead in trespasses and sins." Yet if you press them concerning the depravity of the will you will find that they reply, "No, man is free to choose what he wants." Man is only free to choose according to his nature and as man has a sinful nature he will not choose that which is spiritual. He will not make choice of Christ by himself. He has no desire to make choice of Christ, because he sees no beauty in Him that he should desire Him. The sheep will eat grass and the lion will eat flesh, but what does the

sinner desire? He feeds on the mountains of vanity. He will not feed on Christ. If we examine man's affections we see they are set on the pleasures of sin. Man is a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God. Why is it that man is so adverse to the worship of God? Why is His Word left unread? Why is the Bible a closed book left on the shelf, if indeed it is in the house at all? Why is it that people do not pray? It is because they do not know and do not love the Lord. This proves that man in his natural state is dead in trespasses and sins. It shows the need of the Father's drawing, so that their affections may be set on things above. Why is it that people are continually immersed in the vain song of the pop star and live for drink and gambling? Again the answer is the same.

In spite of this man thinks well of himself. He looks to his virtues or qualities and gifts. Man has natural qualities and may perform various commendable duties and perhaps religious duties. Consequently the conclusion reached is that these certain commendable acts or duties give us acceptance with God. Man thinks he can buy his favour with God in this way. No one denies that he possesses these natural gifts, but what does he do with these natural gifts? He uses them for his own advantage and for his own prosperity. He seeks to wield these natural blessings, that God gave to him, to obtain the favour of his fellow men. He uses these gifts to obtain friends and to spread his influence. Thus he also concludes that by these various gifts and qualities he may not only gain the favour of man and his own advancement but also the favour of God. How ready he is to justify himself. Christ said concerning the Pharisees, "Ye are they which justify yourselves." There was Paul going about to establish his own righteousness. How proud he was in his unconverted days. He was proud of his city. He was proud of his upbringing. His teacher was none less than Gamaliel. He was taught according to the most perfect manner of the Pharisees. How zealous he was towards God. He had a good opinion of himself and so he thought that God also had a good opinion of him. Men relying on their natural gifts or religious and moral duties have the same attitude as the Pharisee who prayed in the temple after this manner, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." But this is not the drawing of the Father, it is natural conceit and carnal presumption.

Once again man is so used to buying the things that he needs for his temporal use. If he wants a home, if he wants shelter, if he wants food or clothing, then he must work and earn his way. This is the way he is used to living and thinking. His whole outlook is channelled in this way. Then he tries to apply this outlook to spiritual matters. He thinks that because he

needs to buy his food and clothing that the same must be true when he comes to consider acceptance with God. He thinks he must buy his favour with God, with religious duties. The Bible however has something altogether different to tell us. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that has no money, come, buy, and eat" (Isaiah 55:1). He cannot pay for he has no money. He has nothing to offer God because he is a *sinner* and all his "righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). His sins have made him bankrupt so that he is in debt to God. God's law has been broken and demands fulfillment or payment. Sinful nature has no ability to make this payment. Thus he must be drawn by the Father to Christ who has made the payment needed for sinners, for we are not redeemed by silver and gold but by the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18).

There is still another reason why man must be drawn by the Father. It does not matter who the preacher is. He may be the most famous of preachers such as Paul himself. If Paul stood here tonight and delivered the most powerful sermon, that would not have any effect upon sinners without the drawing of the Father. The Apostle acknowledges this, when he says, "Paul may plant and Apollos may water but the Lord giveth the increase". There was Apollos, one who was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures. He could expound the Word of God so clearly and forcefully. Still that would be of no use apart from the drawing of the Father. Some people may be drawn by eloquence but that is not sufficient. All must be drawn by the Father to Christ for salvation.

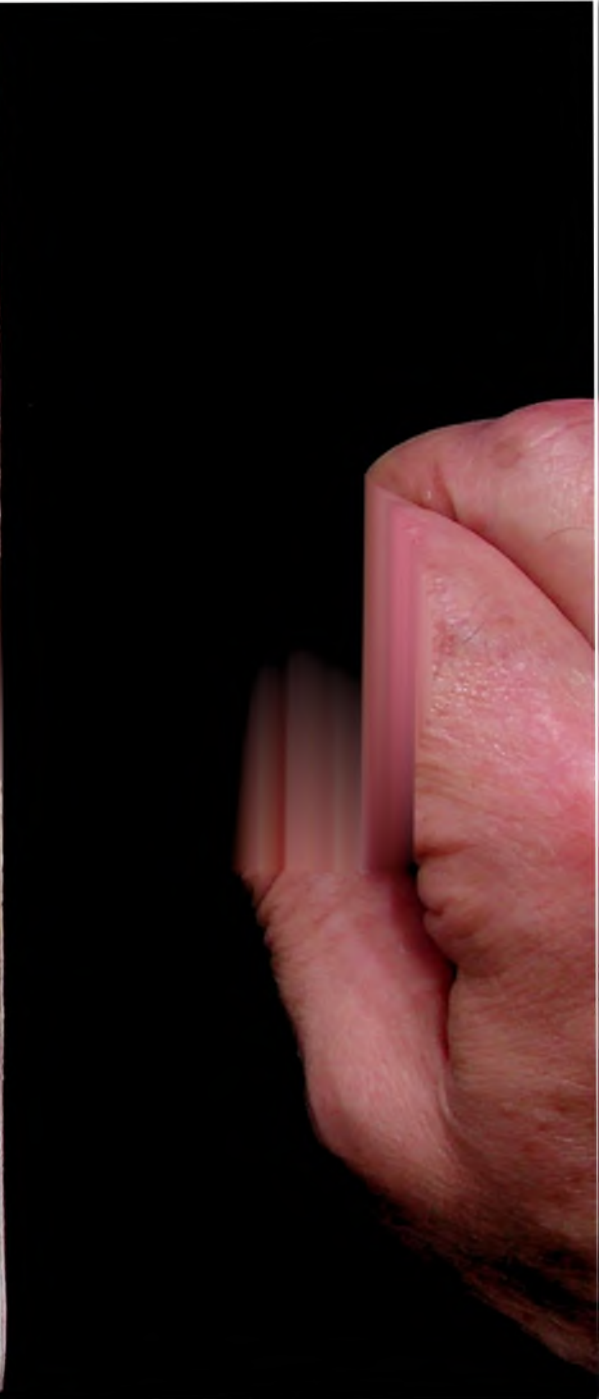
We may now go on to notice in the second place, the nature of the Father's drawing. Because of the desperate wickedness of man the nature of this work is a gracious one. If it is a gracious work it is also sovereign. It is of God's sovereign good pleasure that sinners are saved from this corruption and made willing in a day of God's power, for the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. That is the testimony of the Bible concerning the heart of man. If the Father draws such to Christ then He is displaying grace and showing mercy to people that were deceived, proud, rebellious and hostile against the truth in their sinful condition.

The nature of the Father's drawing is seen in the great power that is manifested. Now we know that in the creation of the world great power was manifested and so that is also true of the new creation, when the soul is created anew in Christ Jesus. The Lord is He who creates a clean heart and renews a right spirit and this is altogether of the power of God. It is by the grace of God and by the power of His Spirit that one is created anew.

It is not by any influence of the world. It is not by any influence of men. It is not by the influence of gracious men and of good men, but according to the power of God. We see what a wonderful thing it is when a child is born. So in the Word of God we see that those who are Christians in truth are born again. When a person is born again he has a new will, new desires, new interests, a new appetite, and new affections. Those things that he delights in now he had no regard for in his unconverted days. So, "It is not by might nor by power but by my Spirit saith the Lord." When people say they are not interested in such matters, that is because of the enmity that is in the heart by nature. But when the Lord deals in mercy and when the Father draws the soul to Christ there is a new appetite.

The Father's drawing makes those who were enemies to God by wicked works, the friends of the Lord. Saul of Tarsus showed the utmost enmity against the Lord and against His people. He had no time at all for the gospel of Christ and yet when the Lord met with him on the Damascus Road we see the difference. What a difference was also made when the three thousand at Pentecost were converted. They were Jerusalem sinners who had desired the death of Christ. But they were brought to this, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved". Instead of being like ravening wolves as they were before the crucifixion, they were brought to repentance. Christ had prayed for them, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." These beautiful words were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in a large measure. Many of those who desired the crucifixion of Christ were pardoned and forgiven. What power! What grace!

The drawing of the Father changes those who strayed morally and who went far and wide from the moral law of God, not only in their hearts but also in their outward life. Among the Corinthians, Paul tells us there had been fornicators, idolators, effeminate and abusers of themselves with mankind. He says, "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified." There was the woman of Samaria, one who had five husbands and yet we see that by the grace of God she was changed. She was a different person. She no longer lived according to her former lusts, a life of disobedience and rebellion against God. We see how the covetous are made liberal. There was Zacchaeus feathering his own nest; advancing his own cause at the expense of others. The lust of greed is that which operated in his heart and controlled his whole life. Yet because of the drawing of the Father he was made liberal. When Christ met with him he restored fourfold that which he had taken falsely from other people. Again the ignorant are enlightened. This can be seen when we read the



accounts of mission work. Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides, went to preach the gospel to headhunters who were given over to the grossest heathen practices and darkness. By the power of the gospel there were multitudes who were saved by the preaching of this famous missionary. Christ, by the gospel, shines into our darkened hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Father's drawing delivers us from the power of the world. How the world is like a magnet. It makes such demands upon us that we in our natural condition must conform to its standards and philosophy. The world demands that we must live according to its dictates, to its pattern of life and to its outlook. The world wields the big stick and it says, "How dare you be different". How hard it is to go against the philosophy, the practices and the social patterns it sets forth. How hard it is to be different from your work-mates and from your friends, or from worldly relatives who may try to keep you from the gospel of Jesus Christ. But when the Father draws us we overcome the world. It is because the love of Christ constrains us.

Thirdly when the Father draws, sinners come to Christ. Use is made by the Holy Spirit of the law of God in the first place. The law is used to drive sinners from all false refuges. By the law is the knowledge of sin. People today want to hear smooth things. Preach the gospel, yes, but do not mention the hard things. That will put people off, and drive them away. The very opposite is the truth. Where the Word of God is blessed, it is by the law that there is the knowledge of sin. It is by the law of God that every mouth is stopped and all the world becomes guilty before God. We like to hide behind various sinful refuges. We betake ourselves to the covenant of works, and hide behind our works or duties. What does the Lord do but drive us away from these false refuges. Whatever refuges of lies we take ourselves to, when the Lord deals in mercy He drives from every false hope. It is a mercy to be delivered from a false foundation for eternity. If we think that we are going to be accepted by God because of what we do or what we are, we are mistaken. The Lord delivers us from a sense of false security. The security of Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, was his religious position and knowledge. He was a master in Israel, but when he came to Jesus by night he was taught that he must be born again. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus had to be shown his ignorance, even though he was a master in Israel, for he did not understand the very basic essentials of the truth.

While it is true that a man is driven from every false refuge there is also the other aspect of effectual calling. There must be gospel drawing too. A

person is not coerced; not dragged against his will. After the law has done its work the sinner is drawn to Christ, as He reveals Himself a Saviour of sinners, most necessary and suitable. The good news of Christ is manifested and when the Lord is lifted up He will draw all men unto Him. "And I," says Christ, "If I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." Christ is lifted up as One who came to seek and save the lost.

Christ is lifted up in His Person. The manifestation of His glory in His Person draws sinners to Him. Who is Christ? A good man? Many set forth Christ as a good man and nothing more. But regarding Christ's divine nature, He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person. He is God manifest in the flesh. When thinking of the human nature of Christ we refer to the perfection of His human nature. It is revealed to us in Scripture that He is without spot or blemish. The human nature of Christ is thus quite unlike the rest of human nature. He has done all things well. Christ is perfect without the least trace of sin, original sin or actual transgression. His virgin birth ensured that there was no original sin transmitted. He was "conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost and born of her yet without sin." The disciples were beholding the glory of Christ who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. "We beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). Now, if the Lord is lifted up in the glory of His Person and in the glory of His finished work; His redemptive work, poor sinners are drawn to Christ to receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation. It has been said that Christ's soldiers are volunteers. In the old days in Britain, the navy was replenished by press gangs going around, taking and forcing men into the navy. As far as Christ's soldiers are concerned they are volunteers because they are drawn by His preciousness. Those drawn to Christ see beauty in Him that they should desire Him, when He is revealed in His glory as mediator and when He is revealed in His suitability as Saviour. He is the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely One. He becomes all our salvation and all our desire. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Now just leaving our subject at this time I want you to consider two things. First of all we need not think that we have come to Christ if we think that we can come to Him without the drawing of the Father. Dr Kennedy preached a sermon on this text and in that sermon he says that we have never been to the school of Christ if we have passed over this first and basic lesson. If you think that you can come to Christ in your own strength; by your own ability, you have passed over this lesson. This is

said that you might realise that in yourself there is no good thing; there is no ability to save yourself and that you need the drawing of the Father.

Now the other thing I want to leave with you tonight is this. Do you see that nothing will do, but the drawing of the Father? Do you feel your inability, grieve over your inability and feel very conscious of your inability? Is this something that disturbs you? Is it your prayer and desire that the Lord would quicken you? The Psalmist could say, "My soul cleaves to the dust, quicken me according to thy Word." Your soul cleaves to the dust too. You are conscious of your deadness. You are conscious of your carnality. It is something you wish to be rid of. You feel the straitness of the gate and the narrowness of the way and unbelief is a burden to you. It may be that you are being drawn by the Father and you are coming through the strait gate into the narrow way. As another you say "I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Now, if the Father has brought you this far, He will continue to draw you and lead you in His everlasting way. If the Father has begun to draw you to Christ, then where He begins the good work He will perform it till the day of Jesus Christ. You realise there is no rest except you rest in Christ. There is no peace for you but what Christ gives. He is all your salvation and all your desire. Here in the promise you see Jesus beckoning you on. He is calling you to Himself. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto me," He says, "All ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." What precious words we have here. May the Father so draw you to Christ this night that you might rejoice in Him, having no confidence in the flesh. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." May God bless His Word.

The Plague of the Heart

by Rev. John Colquhoun

Those who are still in a state of nature imagine, and often say, that they have a good heart. The reason, however, is, that they have not been taught by the Holy Spirit, and therefore, are ignorant of the fact revealed in Scripture that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The child of God, through being taught from above, is learning, as he grows older, this solemn truth, so that his heart is a real plague to him, and is increasingly made aware of his need of the prayer of the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." This is a prayer which, if he consults his feelings, he does not find answered, and very often this fact

causes the true Christian to write hard things against himself. When he first began to entertain a hope that Christ was his Saviour he fully expected that, as time went on, he would begin to feel better and more like his profession, but alas, it now seems to be the very reverse. Many things appear and try to assert themselves which he thought were dead long ago, so that it is very difficult for him to believe that his experiences can be consistent with being in a state of grace, and yet if he turns to the Word of God and to what is written concerning the Lord's people he will find that these hard experiences are the same as God's people had in every age of time.

One of the plagues of the heart of a true Christian is, wandering thoughts in solemn duties. I daresay that the most of us have heard of the godly man who was promised a fine horse if he would repeat the Lord's Prayer without entertaining a vain or wandering thought. He did not go far in the duty when he began to wonder if he would get the saddle also. This is characteristic of the prayers and other duties of the Lord's people, and because of this they often address themselves in the language of Scripture, "How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee." That the Psalmist was a true child of God they would never question; that he was afflicted with wandering and vain thoughts is very apparent, for he had to say, "I hate vain thoughts," which shows that he had an experience of them. The more that these vain thoughts intrude themselves into the mind and duties of a living Christian the more he hates them, and this, in itself, is a mark of growing in grace.

It is not only that vain thoughts are a plague as they intrude themselves into a Christian's solemn duties but they are a plague when they carry him into forbidden fields. He can say with Peter, "The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries," but that is the language of the new creation. The old nature has a language of its own, and its manner of speech is to present before the mind scenes and actions of long ago, and in such a way as to insinuate themselves into one's thoughts so that at times one is carried away with them ere he is aware of it. Very often the first intimation that a Christian has of anything being wrong is when he loses the presence of God and a dead formalism settles down upon him, leaving him satisfied with the dead carcass of a mere profession. It is only when he becomes aware of this that he begins to examine himself and discovers that it was his vain thoughts that led him into forbidden fields, and there he sees reasons for adoring the goodness and mercy of God who watched over

him in such a way that these thoughts did not break out into actions. This will cause him often to pray, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."

Another matter which is a plague to the heart of the new man is how little progress he makes in the right way. God's language concerning the children of Israel was, "O that there was such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever." Deut. v. 29. God's spiritual Israel find it part of the plague of their heart that they have not the fear which they would love to have of God, or the reverence which they should have for those things wherein He reveals Himself, and, consequently, that their knowledge of Him is much below what it should be when they consider all that has been done for them. Thus they can find no comparison for themselves but those to whom the Apostle was writing when he said, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." Heb. v. 12.

The plague of the heart is also bearing fruit in how little impression the Word read or preached makes on them. They compare the present with the past in their experience, and find that the former days were better than the latter ones and are constrained to cry with Job, "O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness." They wistfully look back to times when they had a feast of fat things full of marrow, and when the Lord revealed Himself to them in His Word, and they had meltings of heart. The means of grace were then a Bethel where they met with the God of Israel face to face and were enabled to rejoice. It is different now; instead of the days of the Son of Man which they then experienced in their souls they have darkness, hardness and sorrow. They go to the Bible and it is a sealed book, the preaching of the Word seems to them to lose its point and, in secret duties, their heavens are as brass and their earth as iron.

The source from which all the plagues of the heart of the child of God comes is the carnal mind, of which we read that it is death. It is "enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." It attacks the living soul on every possible occasion, continually waiting for an opportunity to bring it into bondage and to mar all duties in which it is engaged. Being in league with Satan it is ever ready to treat with him and to obey his suggestions, and if it possibly can it will keep the

Christian from a close walk with God and cause him to have much distraction in duties. This requires ceaseless vigilance on the part of the new creature, and as that vigilance is kept up there is an ever increasing and painful knowledge of the presence of the enemy within the gate, causing the mournful complaint to be uttered, "Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Keder! My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace."

With all the plagues with which the carnal mind afflicts the gracious soul full well he knows that Israel's God is without variableness or shadow of turning, and that the blame for his condition cannot be laid at God's door, and because of their love to him none of His people will blame Him. They smite upon their own bosoms and say, My folly makes it so. Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child of God, and there he discovers the cause of his sad condition. Can the foolish and wicked heart be improved? Will the carnal mind be changed? No! Nothing will do but a new heart, and therefore the plague of heart which the true Christian experiences sends him often with an errand to the Throne of Grace, and keeps him going there till he draws his last breath in the world, and then the plague of his heart will never trouble him any more throughout eternity.

Letter

by Lord Roden

(The following letter was written to Sir George Sinclair of Ulbster in Caithness and is included in Sir George's Memoirs. How gratifying it would be to hear of similar letters being exchanged between those in high station today. While not unknown even in our dark day, yet we think it is of very rare occurrence).

Tulleymore Park,
August 24th, 1824.

My Dear Sinclair,

I was very glad to receive your letter, together with its enclosure. If one sinner's repentance is the joy of the angels in heaven, how ought the news of one brother whom we were acquainted with in the flesh being brought to a knowledge of Jesus rejoice us — "Yea, I do rejoice, and I will rejoice."

I need not tell you the blessing and comfort of Christians; I need not tell

you the peace it bestows under all circumstances, and the serenity which it produces, even in the most adverse circumstances. We are taught there is a "needs be" for every trial. We are brought to see that everything must work together for good for the Lord's chosen, and therefore it is that we can, not merely understand, but adopt, the language of Paul, and rejoice in the midst of tribulation. As you know, I have lived a great part of my life in all that the world calls great and good. I have sat basking in the sunshine of my Sovereign's favour; I have experienced the applause and fawning flattery of the world; I have had everything in abundance of what this world calls good, but I do see that they are all trumpery. I desire to count them all as dung and dross, when compared with the truths of Christ's Gospel — when brought into the same scales with that heaven which He has in store for His people.

I am glad to hear you are living in the retirement of Scotland, as I trust it is there the Lord means to teach you *yourself* before perhaps he will call you into active life again. And oh, my dear Sinclair, if you learn yourself, you will learn the best lesson you ever learnt, and the most astonishing one, too; for, if you learn right, you will see yourself nothing but a lump of sin and corruption — hateful in the sight of Holiness because of your corrupt nature — and this sight will lead you more and more to think of a heavenly, and you will daily grow in estimation of that glorious, that all-sufficient, that free blood-bought reward — that one atonement that was made for you in the blood of Jesus, and that glorious work that was wrought out for you in that righteousness with which He covers His people. Our situation here is very retired. We are far from the buzz of the world, but that don't lessen the conflict. There is a world in our hearts which it is well for us to be always at war with; but it is a blessed thought that the warfare is one — not as in other cases, doubtful — for we are more than conquerors through Him who has loved us.

We leave this for Dundalk, another place I have twenty-five miles from hence, next month, when Lady Roden is going to be confined. I gave her your message. She remembers you very well, and desires her kind regards to you, and she is not a little rejoiced to think that the Lord has been pleased to open your eyes, and to show you Himself as *all* in all. I shall be truly happy, whenever it is your convenience, to hear from you, though you must not expect many quick replies from me, as I am deeply engaged in business, which occupies a great part of my time.

I would conclude by begging of you to remember me in your prayers. We are in much difficulty in this country (Ireland) from great opposition to contend with, and we have all around us staring us in the face, every

step we take, the horrid engine of iniquity at work — “Popery, in all its worst shapes.”

That the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the peace of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, may belong to you and yours, is the sincere wish of

Your sincere Friend in the best bonds,
Roden.

The Janeways

(Continued from page 300)

The next brother, James Janeway, became a student in Christ Church, Oxford in 1655. At the close of his pursuits in the University, he went to reside in his mother's house at Windsor, and devoted himself to private tuition. It is probable he had no benefice, but, as a non-conformist, was silenced by the Act of 1662. During the plague he was indefatigable in preaching the Gospel, but escaped the contagion. As soon as he supposed the persecuting spirit of the age allowed, a chapel or meeting-house was erected for him in Jamaica Row, Rotherhithe. It was, however, pulled down by the soldiers, but the people built another on the same spot upon a larger scale. He had numerous and respectable audiences, and was the honoured instrument of effecting a great reformation in the neighbourhood.

The high party, being exceedingly exasperated at his popularity and success, made several attempts on his life. On one occasion, as he was walking along the wall at Rotherhithe, he had a narrow escape from a shot. The bullet went through his hat, but inflicted no personal injury. At another time, the soldiers broke into his meeting-house, exclaiming, as they pressed through the crowd, “Down with him! down with him!” They jumped upon a form or bench, with the view of pulling him out of the pulpit, but providentially the bench gave way. The confusion which ensued afforded an opportunity of escape; for some of his friends threw a coloured coat over him, and put a white hat on his head. A further attempt was made to secure him when engaged in preaching at a gardener's house. The troopers, having dismounted, rushed into the premises but he had time to throw himself on the ground, where his friends, intercepting the soldiers, concealed him so effectually from

them, by covering him with cabbage-leaves, that he again escaped. He died in the prime of life, on March 16th 1674, in the 38th year of his age.

Rev. Nathaniel Vincent, who preached his funeral sermon, said to the congregation:—

Oh what a friend did you lose when your Pastor was snatched from you! You were as dear as his own soul! How did he pray, and weep, and preach, and labour, and all to this end, that you might be sincere converts, and work out your own salvation. Very few could match my brother Janeway in zeal, in compassion, in holy activity, in affection, in sincerity. He sought not yours but you, and desired ten thousand times more to gain souls than ought beside. He endeavoured to debase the world in your esteem, and it was low in his own; he strove to raise your affections heavenward, and there was his heart and treasure. Christ he loved, in Christ he believed, Christ he preached, Christ he commended. And how did he rejoice when any that before rejected the Lord Jesus were persuaded to give their consent to Him.

Great was the sweetness of his natural temper and disposition. And his excellence of nature was very much heightened by the grace of God. He made it his business to be religious. He practised himself what he preached to others. He was a serious mourner for the decays of godliness in this backsliding age. His heart was inflamed with love to Christ. His expressions sometimes showed unusual raptures and ecstasies of love. He would beg that he might equal Paul or John, nay, the very seraphims, in loving, that he might be sick and die of love. Blessed soul, thou hast now thy fill! Thou lovest thy Lord now, andd enjoyest this love to the uttermost of thy capacity!

His bowels of compassion yearned towards immortal souls. He knew the worth of his own, and the souls of others. How earnestly would he warn men to flee from future wrath! How eagerly and sweetly would he woo them to give their consent to be espoused to Christ! He laboured abundantly, spending himself in his Master's work. He was a mighty man in prayer. Augustine tells of a certain person who prayed as if he would breathe out his very soul and life in prayer. This may be applied to my brother Janeway. He was a mighty wrestler with God, and would not be put off without a blessing. He was much for unity and love. He followed peace as well as holiness. He abounded in works of charity, having seriously pondered that saying of the Lord, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'. What crowned all his other excellencies was that he was exceedingly humble. He had very low thoughts of himself, and in honour preferred others before himself.

He had a great conflict with Satan a while before leaving this world; and truly I do not wonder that the devil should buffet him who had with such vigour and success endeavoured to overthrow his kingdom. To prepare him for the encounter, the Lord at first did shine upon his soul, and gave him some assurance that heaven was his inheritance. But afterwards there intervened a cloud, and Satan's chain was lengthened. That lion roared upon him, and endeavoured to disturb his peace. The great thing he blamed himself for was his aptness to be hurried over private duties, since he was so much engaged in public work. The accuser of the brethren was very fierce in his accusations, and so far prevailed, that Mr Janeway cried out, "I am at infinite uncertainty as to my future state. I thought I had been sincere, but satan tells me I have been a hypocrite"; and then added, "whatever you do, do not dally in religion; it is only godliness in the power of it that can strengthen against the fear of death". Satan would not yet give over, but having begun to batter his faith, gave a fresh assault; then, with a mournful voice, he cried out, Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! Infinite! Infinite! Infinite! Everlasting! Everlasting! Everlasting! A relation that stood by added, An eternity of glory! To which he replied, Of horror! of horror! unspeakable horror!

This was his conflict, and truly it was a sore one. But after this blackest darkness followed the break of day. Satan prevailed so far, that he might be the more remarkably foiled for the God of peace did 'tread the evil one under his feet.' The Comforter visited him and bare witness with his spirit that he was a child of God.

Not long before he died, he blessed God for the assurance of His love, and said that he could as easily die as close his eyes. He added, Here am I longing to be silent in the dust, and enjoying Christ in glory. I long to be in the arms of Jesus. It is not worth while to weep for me. Then remembering how busy the devil had been about him, he was exceedingly thankful to God for His goodness in rebuking him.

Afterwards, he brake forth, saying, though so weak, with a loud voice, Amen! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! and desired others to join with him; which they not presently doing, he added, James Janeway is the only singer. He was quickly seized upon with another rapture of joy, and thus expressed it, Millions of praises to the most high Jehovah! Heaven and earth praise Him! Ye mountains and hills praise Him! All His hosts praise Him! All ye saints bless Him, who hath visited us in our low estate, and redeemed us unto Himself! All must be ascribed to free grace, from the beginning to the end.

Then he begged of God that He would bless His people, and take away

animosities and names of division from among them. These were the last words which he was heard to speak distinctly. Thus triumphantly he went to glory. Thus an abundant entrance was administered to him into the everlasting kingdom! But if his joy and praises were such before he was got quite thither, when he was actually come within heaven's gate, and first saw the Lord face to face, Oh, who can conceive his joy and wonder!

Abraham Janeway was the fourth brother. He was a preacher in London previous to the period of the plague; but being of a contemplative turn of mind, which somewhat unfitted him for very active or public exertions, he retired with his wife to live at Buntingford in Huntingdonshire. His Presbyterian principles, however being notorious, he was seized by Justice Crouch, under a pretence of friendship; but having made his escape from the grasp of the persecutor, he sank, under the family complaint of consumption, in September 1665. Though he died that very week when the plague took its highest toll — 7165 persons in one week — yet he did not die of the plague.

Mr Vincent says of him, He was a righteous person, a righteous minister, a dear brother, taken away in the flower of his years. He was a merciful man, and showed great pity and compassion to souls; was earnest with them to leave their sins and close with Christ. He spent himself, and hastened his own death, to keep others from perishing everlastingly. He was an upright man, a true-hearted Nathaniel, and one of very promising hopes for very considerable usefulness.

Joseph Janeway, the youngest of the Janeway brothers, was a Conformist. In this only, we believe, did he essentially differ from the rest. It is a striking fact that all of them were consumptive, all died under the age of forty, and all were pious men.

(Extracted from a sketch of the Janeways by Rev. F.A. Cox, DD., LL.D.)

The Barrier Act

by Rev. Donald Beaton

The Barrier Act, of which so much has been heard in recent controversy, was an Act passed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1697. Previous to this, from the year 1560 until a few years after the Revolution Settlement, the General Assembly, on its sole authority, passed Acts that had reference to laws that were binding on the members and judicatories of the Church. That this state of matters was

considered unsatisfactory seems to be indicated by the action of the Assembly in 1639, for it ordained "That no innovation which may disturb the peace of the Church and make division, be suddenly proposed and enacted, but so as the motion be first communicated to the several synods, presbyteries, and kirk-sessions, that the matter may be approved by all at home, and commissioners may come well prepared, unanimously to conclude a solid deliberation upon these points in the General Assembly." This was the forerunner of the famous Barrier Act, and paved the way for the Act anent Innovations, which the Assembly of 1695-96 passed into law. It declares that "the Assembly having heard an overture brought in from the Committee for overtures, that no new Acts relating to the doctrine, worship, or government of this Church be made until they be first transmitted to the several presbyteries of this national Church; which being considered, the General Assembly recommends it to the members of this Assembly to discourse upon the said overture with their respective presbyteries, that the next General Assembly may be more ripe to determine anent the conveniency thereof." The result of this "discourse" recommended by the Assembly, was the passing of the Barrier Act on the 8th January, 1697. This Act, which has played such an important part in the legislation of the Church, may well be described as the Magna Charta of Presbyterian ecclesiastical law. Its text is as follows:—

"The General Assembly, taking into their consideration the overture and Act made in the last Assembly concerning innovations, and having heard the report of the several commissioners from presbyteries, to whom the consideration of the same was recommended, in order to its being more ripely advised and determined in this Assembly; and considering the frequent practice of former Assemblies of this Church, and that it will mightily conduce to the exact obedience of the Acts of Assemblies, that General Assemblies be very deliberate in making of the same, and that the whole Church have a previous knowledge thereof, and their opinion be had therein, and for preventing any sudden alteration or innovation or other prejudice to the Church in either doctrine, or worship, or discipline, or government thereof; do therefore, appoint, enact, and declare that, before any General Assembly of this Church shall pass any *Acts which are to be binding rules and constitutions to the Church*, the same Acts be first proposed as overtures to the Assembly, and being by them passed as such, be remitted to the consideration of the several presbyteries of this Church, and their opinions and consent reported by their commissioners to the next General Assembly following, who may

then pass the same into Acts, if the more general opinion of the Church, thus had, agree thereunto."

The great end the Barrier Act had in view was to guard against "any sudden alteration or innovation or other prejudice to the Church in either doctrine, or worship, or discipline, or government," but it had only reference to legislation of a certain kind. Not every act passed by the Assembly was to undergo the process laid down in the Barrier Act. It was only legislation that was to be of the nature of "binding rules and constitutions." And to say that any act passed through the Barrier Act is not binding on the members and judicatories of the Church is to ignore the express terms of the Act itself and read a meaning into language that it will by no means bear. That this is the true meaning of the Act is a fact confirmed by such authorities as Principal Hill, Taylor Innes, and Dr Roberts of America.

Principal Hill, in his Constitution of the Church of Scotland, says — "Every judicatory is occasionally called upon to enforce the laws of the Church by making such special enactments, in conformity to those general laws as are suggested by the circumstances of the district under its jurisdiction; and the Church courts, like all others, have a right within certain limits to regulate the form of its own proceedings. It is not to such partial enactments or regulations we refer when we speak of the legislative power of the Church. We apply that term to the power of making standing laws concerning matters of general importance *which are binding upon all the members and judicatories of the Church*. From the establishment of Presbyterian government in 1560 until 1697 such laws proceeded from the sole authority of the General Assembly, but an Act of the Church passed in the latter year, which we are accustomed to call the Barrier Act, prescribes the mode of enacting permanent and standing constitutions." Dr Hill here draws the distinction between "partial enactments" and "standing laws which are binding on all the members and judicatories of the Church." The Church, like any other body of people gathered together into a society, has the right within certain limits of regulating its own proceedings, but in regard to the standing laws which are binding on all the members and judicatories and of the Church, these must come through the Barrier Act and thereby become "permanent and standing constitutions."

Taylor Innes, in his well known work, the Law of Creeds in Scotland, indirectly confirms the above contention. Speaking of the Act of 1711 dealing with subscription to the Confession of Faith, he points out that great objection was raised to it in the 18th century, when it was

denounced as illegal. It was objected that it had not received the consent of the majority of presbyteries. To obviate this objection an Act was brought in in 1740, and after transmission to presbyteries for many successive years, at last received the approbation of a majority of presbyteries and thereby became a standing law of the Church. "So that," says Taylor Innes, "the stipulation and subscription so far as regards probationers have received the sanctions contemplated by the Barrier Act, and are Church law, in so far as the Church has the power of making law." The main point of interest to us at this time in regard to this Subscription controversy, is that the Barrier Act placed the Acts of 1711 and 1782 on a different footing, and "that they became the law of the Church in so far as the Church has power of making law." In fact, they became binding rules and constitutions.

Dr Roberts, in an article in the second volume of the Presbyterian and Reformed Review, bears similar testimony. "The history of the Scotch Barrier Act," he says, "is unquestionably the key to the interpretation of the American Barrier Act and proves that the latter, like the former, was intended to deal with matters ecclesiastical which the American Church has seen proper to gather formally *within her constitution*." All which goes to prove conclusively that legislation passed through the Barrier Act is Church law in a higher sense than Acts which may not have undergone this ordeal. Again, these Acts are not simply "binding rules and constitutions" for certain parties in the Church, but by their very nature they become binding upon all who in any way are connected with the Church. Principal Hill makes this clear enough when he says that the Barrier Act deals with the "making of standing laws concerning matters of general importance which are binding upon all the members and judicatories of the Church." Now, if this be so, what course is left open to those who, on conscientious grounds, may object to such legislation? The raising of this point directs our attention to what seems a serious defect in the Barrier Act, inasmuch as it makes no provision for the rights of minorities. It is true that according to ecclesiastical procedure, minorities have the right of entering a *dissent* against any legislation to which they have conscientious objections. But, after all, a dissent is of the very mildest form of opposition and it "simply keeps the conscience clear," says Sir Henry Moncrieff, "from the responsibility of what one does not approve of." It, however, by no means nullifies the binding effect of what are termed "binding rules and constitutions." In other words, a dissent relieves the dissentient from all responsibility in the steps leading up to and in passing the Act, but it does not relieve him from obligation to obey

the Act once it becomes law provided that Act is of the nature of a binding rule and constitution. That this is the real force of a dissent is pertinently confirmed by Rev. Dr Mair of Earlston, one of the leading authorities on Church law in the Established Church. "Dissent," he says, "against the passing of an Act *does not exempt the dissentient from obedience to it*, but relieves him from responsibility for the consequences of the passing of it."

It is necessary, at this stage of our discussion, to point out that this is the only course open to minorities in the case of objectionable legislation, and that they have no power *to protest* against the finding of a Supreme Court unless they are willing to take the step which persistence in such a course involves, viz., separation from the Church that has passed the law. The greatest confusion exists in the minds of many as to the force of a *protest* and a *dissent*. By the bulk they are regarded as implying the same thing. Nothing could be more erroneous and misleading. A dissent may be and is accepted by a Supreme Court against its decisions but never a protest. Such an action would be suicidal. The only time a protest is recognised in Church procedure is *before* the overture becomes law; and it is worthy of note that Dr Begg, who was such an authority in these matters, always protested *before* and not *after* the overture became law. But to make the matter doubly sure, let us again appeal to authorities. Dr Cook, in his "Styles of Writs, etc., in the Church of Scotland," says — "A dissent can be given in only by those who were present when the judgment dissented from was pronounced, and *no protest can be taken against a decision of the Assembly*." Again, Sir Henry Moncrieff, in his "Practice of the Free Church," says — "The General Assembly being the Supreme Court there is no room for any other procedure against its decisions *except that of dissent with reasons*. There is no room for complaint or appeal."

As we have now laid down the general principles in connection with the Barrier Act, and established our main contentions by appealing to recognised authorities, it only remains for us to take a particular instance wherein these general principles are made manifest. Take the Declaratory Act of 1892, which has caused so much controversy, and has done more than anything else since the Disruption to wreck the ecclesiastical peace of the Highlands. Since that Act passed as an overture through the Barrier Act, and thereafter became law, it stands to reason that, by the very terms of the Barrier Act, it became a "binding rule and constitution" — "binding on all the members and judicatories of the Church," to quote Principal Hill's words. It is a fact that will be admitted on all hands that the Constitutional party considered the doctrines of the Declaratory Act to be of such a nature that nothing short of a *protest* was sufficient to express

their opposition to the same. But what came of these laudable resolutions? In 1893 Rev. Mr Macfarlane tabled his *protest*, and notwithstanding the efforts made to make him withdraw it he manfully refused to do so. With the result that in a short time he found himself without church or manse. When the Synod of Glenelg felt it its duty to protest against the Act its protest was rejected like Mr Macfarlane's with this notable difference, that the members of Synod refused to act on their protest and were content with a dissent. It is therefore only charitable to suppose that those who are declaring throughout the Highlands that they remained in the Free Church under protest, are quite unconscious that there is a world of difference between a protest and a dissent. And to quote Dr Mair's words again, a dissent after all does not exempt the dissentient from obedience to the Act once it becomes law.

(From *F. P. Mag.* Vol 6, page 260)

Book Reviews

Christians Grieve Too by Donald Howard. Pages 30, Price 50 pence, Banner of Truth Trust, September 1980.

This small booklet of 30 pages by the Banner of Truth Trust is the fruit of a period of suffering and grief which followed the death of a beloved wife at the early age of 46 years from cancer, leaving a family of 4 young children, and is written by a Sydney minister. The emphasis is more on the grief itself than the death of his wife. From the date cancer was detected life was prolonged for 6 years more when the husband had time to adjust to his loss but for the grief which followed his wife's death he was not prepared. He quotes C.S. Lewis' words when on a like occasion he too was deprived of his wife, "No one told me". In the 7 short chapters the writer analyses this grief and although references are given in footnotes in support of his statements from Scripture, the approach appears to be more on psychological lines. The interesting question is discussed in the chapter on "Relief of Grief" on where the duty of the physician lies in the case of a patient's illness, especially in the prospect of early death, to give or withhold the facts of the case. Often "a conspiracy of silence frustrates every relationship with the patients", doctor, minister, nurses and sometimes the relatives themselves being involved. Openness and frankness are advised; "put off falsehood and speak truthfully". Of the

pastor's duty there is no doubt, in the words of Jay Adams: "The warrant to do so in spite of family or physician, comes from God". D. Howard says: "It is important to speak of preparation for the possibility of death, for no one knows when another will die". The 2 main sources given at the end of the booklet are Jay E. Adams: "Shepherding God's Flock", New Jersey and C.S. Lewis "A Grief Observed", London, which may indicate the outlook adopted by the writer. One misses the more mature and spiritual treatment of grief given in a paperback by the Banner of Truth Trust which appeared some years ago — Adolphe Monod's Farewell. This well known French divine gave the addresses in this book from a sickbed in the months of his last illness and are rich in consolation which pervades the exposition of Christ's sympathy with His people in sorrow, the communion with Himself to which Christ admits them and the great hope of the Resurrection. Readers, however, may derive help from the pages of this booklet in the way of advice on how to conduct themselves when visited by personal sorrows or called to offer sympathy to their friends in sorrow.

A.F.M.

Colossians & Philemon by Geoffrey B. Wilson. Pages 111, Price £1.50, paperback, Banner of Truth Trust, September 1980.

The series of paperbacks, Wilson's New Testament Commentaries, have justly enjoyed a favourable place in public esteem in the literature of the Pauline Epistles. These small works are not intended to displace the larger commentaries of Calvin, Lightfoot, Eadie, Henricksen, etc, but rather meant to give the flavour of Paul's Epistles to English readers. The present work on Colossians & Philemon should be read with this in view. These epistles were sent by Paul from his prison in Rome and belong to the same period, the one called forth to meet the heresies reported to Paul by Epaphras which had broken out in the Church at Colosse, and the other a tender, courteous letter addressed to Paul's friend, Philemon, whose fugitive slave, Onesimus, the Apostle restores to his master, no longer a dishonest slave but now under Paul's ministry, a sincere believer. Like the other books in the series, Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, etc, the present paperback is more in the nature of a digest of Reformed comment, and the Reformed writers laid under contribution, who are listed at the end of the book, bear witness to the careful, thorough nature of the commentary.

The "Colossian heresy" is spoken of as a "Form of syncretism which

combined Jewish practices with pagan speculation. The Jewish element in this false teaching called for Gentile observance of the ritual requirements of the law, while its pagan element encouraged the worship of angelic intermediaries, and enjoined an asceticism which in its severe treatment of the body went beyond the law's demands" — p. 11. The epistle expounds the pre-eminence of Christ's person and the sufficiency of the Atonement, treated, the author says, with a fulness not found elsewhere in the Apostle's writings. "The epistle forms one of the peaks in the N.T. Revelation of Christ". The letter to Philemon deals with a personal problem but is clearly intended for Church use — "an apostolic letter about a personal matter" — R.P. Martin.

Wilson is a Baptist minister in Huddersfield. His treatment of the familiar passage in Col. 11, v. 12 — "Buried with him in baptism, etc" follows the usual Baptist interpretation for which he calls in the support of F.F. Bruce — "buried with Christ when they were plunged in the baptismal water", he says. On this passage he makes no mention of Eadie, but Eadie is closer to the Reformed position than Wilson when he says that the reference is to the ordinance of baptism, not to the mode. "Men may be buried in baptism without being submerged in water in the same way as they may be circumcised without spilling of blood. The entire statement is spiritual in its nature" — Col. p. 149.

With this reservation in mind, this paperback on Colossians & Philemon may be wholeheartedly recommended.

A.F.M.

God's Righteous Kingdom by Walter J. Chantry, paperback, pages 151, price £1.50, Banner of Truth Trust, 1980.

This is another timely work printed by the Banner of Truth Trust in paperback form in the past year and is contemporary in the discussion of the Lord's Righteous Kingdom on earth, especially in meeting the errors and misrepresentations which beset the religious order which Christ instituted among men, called God's Righteous Kingdom. The subject of the Kingdom of God figured frequently in our Lord's public ministry, particularly as related in the Gospel according to Matthew, in the sermon on the mount where the Gospel of the Kingdom is related — cc. 5-7; in the 7 parables of the Kingdom in chapter 13, two of which are explained; and in the discussion with the disciples at Caesarea Philippi in chapter 16 — pivotal passages for the understanding of the doctrine of the Kingdom, Chantry calls them. The sub-title of the book, "the Laws connected with

the Gospel", indicates the manner of treatment the author gives the subject of the Lord's Righteous Kingdom, and in 12 short chapters is clearly and forcefully developed. The author states that "these studies will not attempt an exhaustive survey of the Kingdom of God" but rather some aspects of the Gospel are selected with a view to elucidate the doctrine of the Church and meet present day attacks upon her.

The opening 2 sections of 5 chapters deal with such matters as the spiritual essence of the Church, defined as the community of his people rescued from the world and brought under his gracious rule, and consists in her communion with God, spiritual life, pure doctrines of faith and sound knowledge which meet the deepest longings of the human heart; the spiritual progress of the Kingdom, when warnings are given against attempts to promote the Church's prosperity by political means or worldly methods, whereas true progress may be expected from the holy lives and faithful labours of the saints and the preaching of the Word in the Spirit. Two chapters of great interest are devoted to the present position of the Kingdom as related to the past and as related to the future. The work of the O.T. prophets, including the ministry of the last and greatest of the order, John the Baptist who though intimating the imminent appearing of Christ did not himself enter the church of the new age, was fulfilled in the coming of the Church of the N.T., renewed and invigorated with a "new level of perception", "a new inwardness of religion" and a "new infusion of supernatural power". In considering the Church of the future, the teaching of Premillennialism and Dispensationalism are discounted as unscriptural theories.

The next section of the book discusses in 6 chapters the Righteousness of the Kingdom. The unchanging Standard of Righteousness is the Law of the Ten Commandments. Inscribed in the hearts of our first parents, it finds its perfect embodiment in the Saviour and is asserted throughout the N.T. in the ministry of Christ and the Apostles. The Moral Law is closely allied with the Gospel. "Attacks upon the preaching of the moral law are attacks upon a vital ingredient of the gospel of the kingdom". "It is tampering with the Gospel itself." A chapter is devoted to the question of the validity of all Mosaic statutes for the Church today. By a careful examination of the Epistle to the Galatians any such doctrine is exposed as untenable. The Church has emerged from its period of minority into the full light of the day of the Gospel. "The weak and beggarly elements" are laid aside but the Moral Law in all its integrity is of abiding validity. However, in distinguishing among the three types of law, the ceremonial, judicial and moral, in favour of the last, too much must not be given away.

The question of the death penalty is brought under the author's survey but briefly and only in application to the crime of blasphemy. The death penalty was also prescribed for the crime of murder under the Mosaic Law. Can any solid reason be given why this very necessary law should be allowed to fall into disuse today and pass away with the redundant Mosaic regulations? A convincing chapter is given to the abiding place that must be accorded to the Sabbath among the laws which belong to the righteous kingdom. The last section of one chapter argues for the "indispensable union of Church and kingdom", treated throughout the book as almost identical, and warns against the dangerous movements which today seek to promote the righteous kingdom of God on earth at the expense and even in contempt of the Church.

This book provides a useful and most interesting study of the Righteous Kingdom or the Christian Church in the midst of the contemporary and to a large extent unbelieving society in which we live.

A.F.M.

Christian Unity. An Exposition of Ephesians 4 vv 1 to 16 by Dr Martin L. Jones. Banner of Truth Trust. Price £5.

At a time when 'Christian Unity' is naively propounded by many as the answer to the survival and the revival of the church, it is surely essential to know what we are really discussing. In this book, the Doctor attempts to describe the origin and nature of the Unity of the Faith, and to his credit, he does so at a level intelligible to ordinary readers. Some seem to aspire to be so abstruse in thought and so philosophical in expression as to baffle the minds of the common people. To such a school of thought the author did not belong. He is evidently bent on instructing and edifying rather than impressing with an aura of erudition. This volume is best understood in the light of the modern or contemporary ecumenical movement. Unity is the central, but not the only subject touched upon. Once the thoroughly political and carnal character of the modern brand of Christian Unity is realised, we appreciate the author's insistence on agreement in doctrine as a necessary basis for the realisation of true spiritual unity. Those obsessed with the popular and political ideal of Christian Unity would be well advised to give this production a fair reading. For those of us who recognise the validity of a scriptural approach to the subject, the Doctor furnishes us with much that is edifying, stimulating and elucidating. The work abounds in interesting directions and useful analogies. The final chapter summarises it all. By underlining and crystallising the salient and

most important principles which have emerged from the study of this portion of Ephesians, the author clinches what he has to say on a subject of intense practical interest and relevance for our day. We would recommend this exposition as a worthy addition to any library. Basic though perhaps not total agreement with the author should incite us to purchase this volume.

F.M.

Notes and Comments

W.C.C. and Liberation Movements

The Word Council of Churches continues its support for liberation movements throughout the world. It recently announced grants to these movements which totalled nearly £300,000. This money, though given for humanitarian purposes, is put into the hands of organisations that will have no qualms about diverting the money to support terrorist activities. In this way the W.C.C. is aiding and abetting the Communist movement and so promoting an anti-Christian cause. Some Churches have protested about these grants and it would be well if other Churches in the organisation did likewise.

Ecumenical Church

Near Croydon a new Ecumenical Church has been built at a cost of £127,000 which will be shared by R.C.'s, Methodists, Baptists, the Church of England, and the United Reformed Church. Such a venture will be welcomed by ecumenicalists as hastening the day when all shall meet together as one body. It is certain in which direction all these ecumenical schemes are tending — certainly not in an evangelical direction but towards the Church of Rome.

Inverness Presbytery and Crematorium

In the North of Scotland we have the strange spectacle of the Presbytery of a professed Christian Church pressing the local Council to erect a crematorium in the town of Inverness. The Inverness Presbytery of the Church of Scotland decided in September to renew their call to the Inverness District Council to make finance available for this project. Wherever the Inverness Presbytery found its warrant for supporting such a proposal, it did not find it in the Bible. All right-thinking people, far less Christian people, cannot but deplore the pagan attitude of many today in

consigning the bodies of their dead to the fire to be burnt to ashes, instead of laying what is mortal of them in the grave, as has been the Christian practice throughout the centuries.

Crime in Scotland

A recent Government report has shown that violent crime has increased by a third. The murder rate fell slightly from 41 to 38. It is reckoned that the prison population reached a new record this year, with a big increase noted particularly in the number of girls under 21 serving custodial sentences, according to a Press report.

As religion and morals are closely bound up together there can be little hope of a real change taking place with regard to crime until the nation experience a spiritual awakening and revival. There is no doubt, however, that the easing of the sanctions against crime and especially of those against murder, has been a contributory factor in the present high incidence of crime.

Church Notes

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

The Synod resolved that "Wednesday, 25th November 1981, be held as a day of humiliation and prayer throughout the Church to confess our sins which contribute to the relative absence of the power of the Holy Ghost in our Assemblies, to blush and pray as did Ezra on account of the accelerating pace of our national spiritual and moral backslidings and cry to the Lord for a revelation of His glorious grace and mercy in the midst of deserved wrath, through the infinite merits of His dear Son."

Induction at Staffin

The short-lived vacancy at Staffin congregation terminated on Tuesday 22nd September when the Rev. D.A. MacLennan, Uig, Lewis was inducted as the minister of the Staffin Free Presbyterian congregation. A large and representative congregation, augmented by friends from localities as far apart as Glasgow, Oban, Inverness and Harris, gathered to witness the solemn yet joyful event. The Moderator, Rev. D. Nicolson presided. The Edict was returned duly served and attested and Edictal proclamation made. The Clerk then preached from 1 Corinthians 15:9, stressing mainly the sovereign, saving nature of the supernatural grace of God and its glorious, practical and edifying results in Paul's Apostleship. Thereafter a narrative of the steps in filling the vacancy was given. Rev

D.A. MacLennan then returned satisfactory answers to the questions put by the Moderator. After reading the Formula, it was subscribed in presence of the congregation by Mr MacLennan. The Moderator then solemnly inducted Rev. D.A. MacLennan to the pastoral charge of the Staffin Free Presbyterian congregation and was followed by the brethren in the Presbytery in extending the right hand of fellowship to him. The newly-inducted minister was addressed in solemn and suitable terms by the Moderator and the congregation addressed most fittingly in a few well chosen words by Rev. H.I. MacKinnon, Strath.

This settlement, which engendered so much joy and enthusiasm in the congregation afforded the Presbytery no little ground for gratitude to the great Head of the Church. Two inductions in such quick succession greatly encouraged the depleted Skye Presbytery and gave fresh hope of better days in Skye.

We earnestly pray that the ministry now begun will be richly owned of God in the conversion of souls, the edification of the Church, and the strengthening of the distinctive witness of the Free Presbyterian Church in this part of the Lord's vineyard.

Fraser MacDonald, Clerk.

Meetings of Presbytery (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 3rd November at 2 p.m.

Australia & New Zealand: At Auckland on 29th January 1982 at 2.30 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 9th February 1982 at 11 a.m.

Dumbarton Manse Fund Closed

The Dumbarton Deacon's Court wish to make known that the Dumbarton Manse Fund is now fully subscribed. After payment of the remaining debt, any surplus will (D.V.) be transferred to the congregational account, from which future Manse charges will be paid. All contributors are warmly thanked for their generous support.

Appeal for Financial Support for the Church's Zimbabwe Mission

At a meeting of the Foreign Mission Committee the present financial needs of the Free Presbyterian Church's Mission in Zimbabwe were carefully reviewed.

The Committee expressed their sincere appreciation of the generosity of friends in Holland in providing large sums of money through the

Mbumba Zending in support of our Mission during recent years to this present time.

Nevertheless, following the period of political unrest, much financial outlay has been needed.

Under Dr James Tallach, the hospital at Mbumba has been restored to former operational standards, with qualified nursing staff. New houses for teachers are essential. There is increased outlay for Mission staff salaries. Replacement of defective Mission transport is called for: and there is additional expenditure considered desirable for the running of the Mission.

At the present time there is urgent need for increased financial assistance from the Church in Scotland to meet outlay already incurred.

The Committee earnestly appeal to our Congregations and friends to *respond now as generously as they possibly can* as the Lord may enable them.

Congregations should be made aware of this Appeal: and Collections such as Retiring Collections might be arranged *as soon as possible*: and the money forwarded to General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Kelvindale, Glasgow, *without delay*.

The Mission stands for the Gospel of "the unsearchable riches of Christ".

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow, G12 0HE, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Sustentation Fund: Mr & Mrs D. MacLeod, West Tarbert, £60.

Home Mission Fund: Mr & Mrs D. Macleod, West Tarbert, £40.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £1,000 for Mission in Zimbabwe; Anon., Glasgow postmark, £10.

Aged & Infirm Ministers' etc Fund: Psalm 42 v. 4, £25. Trinitarian Bible Society — Psalm 42 v. 4, £5.

The Publications Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donation:—
Free Distribution Fund: Friend, Larne, £4.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Barnoldswick: B. W., England £20; Friends, Gairloch £30; Anon, Glasgow, £5, both per R. Middleton; Dingwall Friend £50 per Dr R.K. MacCuish; Anon £20; E.K. £10, all for Building Fund; E.K. £5 for Communion Expenses; Lochcarron Friend, £5 per T. De-Lacey; Inverness Friend, £45, both for General or Congr. Funds.

Dumbarton: R. & E. McD. £13 for Manse Fund, £7 for Organisation Fund; Friend, £5; Mrs Rankin, £10, both in plate for Congr. Fund. (Dumbarton Manse Fund is now closed — see notice in Church Notes).

Fort William: Friend, Harris £5; Friend, Meavaig, £5; Friend, Harris, £5, all per Rev. J.A. MacDonald; J.R. MacK. £7 per Mrs Cameron; Mrs C. MacK. £5 per D. MacN for Minibus; Envelope in plate £1; In ever loving memory of a beloved son and brother, Job 1 verse 21, £10 per F.F. for Sust. Fund; Friend of the Cause, Caol £2 for Sust. Fund per Rev. J.A. MacDonald; Miss E.O.G., Edinburgh, £5 for most needy fund (Env in plate).

Greenock: R.H.C., Bangor, N.I. £15 for Congr. Purposes; A Friend, Lochcarron, £10 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. L. MacLeod.

Kyle: Friend, Kyle £2 per Rev. A. Murray; J. & A. Mack., 25 Wemyss Place, Kyle, £5, both for Plockton communion expenses; Envelope in plate £10 for Sust. Fund; J. & A. Mack. £10; Envelope in plate £20; Anon, Lochcarron, £5; Envelope in plate £10, all for Manse Fund.

Lochbroom: Two Dingwall Friends £5 for Communion Expenses.

Ness: From the estate of the late Miss Mary Morrison, Ness £100; Mr & Mrs M., Skigersta, £10; Friend, North Tolsta, £5; Friend, London per Rev. W.M. £30, all for Congr. Funds; Mr & Mrs A.M., Glasgow, £20 for new windows in Skigersta meeting house; Friends, U.S.A. \$500; Friend, Edinburgh, £100, both for Congr. Purposes.

Shieldaig: Anon £2; Inverness Friend £10, both for Building Fund; Dingwall Friend, £2 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. D. Campbell.

Staffin: J.N.D., Portree £20 for Communion Expenses; J. & R. £5 for Communion door collection; Friend, Staffin, £20; Anon, Staffin, £20 both for Manse decorating, all per M.M.I. Friend, £10 "for extra expenses at the moment" per M.M.

Stornoway: Mr A.N. £2 for Organisation Fund, £5 for Home Missions, £1.60 for Church door collections, £25 for Sust. Fund, per Mr Neil Murray; Anon, £10; Anon, £5; Friends, North Tolsta, £20 per Rev. J. MacLeod; Miss C.M. £10 per Mr Neil Murray, last 2 for Sust. Fund.

Strath: Mr J.G. £5 per M. MacLeod; Anon, £2 (in plate), both for Sust. Fund.

Tomatin: Envelope in plate £30 for Congr. Expenses.

Wick: Two friends: N.T. £20 for Wick Congr. per Rev. R.R. Sinclair.

Tour Notes

Tour to Zimbabwe

It is hoped to organise a 15 day tour to the Zimbabwe Mission in mid-July 1982 (D.V.). The price of this tour will depend on the number of persons that will go. Will persons interested please contact R. MacDonald, 1 Balnabeen Drive, Dingwall, (Tel. Dingwall 64022) by mid-December.

Tour to Israel

Rev. Angus Morrison, Oban hopes (D.V.) to lead a party on a 12-day visit to Israel. The departure date will be 29th May 1982, returning on 9th June. The total cost for the trip is £395. Those who would like further information including brochure giving full details of itinerary and booking form, should send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Rev. Angus Morrison, F.P. Manse, Ardmore, Ardconnel Terrace, Oban.